



SPOTLIGHT ON SAFEGUARDING

Working together to keep our young people safe

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Image sharing

With the rise of camera phones and other devices in the last few years, taking photos of themselves and their friends is commonplace amongst young people. These photos are often shared online. In recent years, there has also been an increase in young people asking others to share nudes of themselves. This is commonly known as sexting.

There are reasons as to why a young person might agree to sending an image of themselves in this way:

- they may believe they are in a consensual romantic relationship
- they may be pressured, tricked or coerced into sharing an image
- they may be exploited or groomed into sending the images.

The law on image sharing:

In order to protect children, any indecent image of a child (someone under 18) is known as Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM), even if the image was created by the child themselves (self-generated CSAM). The law states that it is illegal to create or share CSAM. Creating images also includes AI or photoshopped images. The law also includes possession of an image and re-sharing images. Parents should not have images sent to their device, even if the intent is to report the image. Images should be reported to the Police immediately. It is important to note that this law is to protect children, not criminalise those who send images of themselves.

EDUCATE THEM ON THE LAW

Discuss the law with them. It protects them from the pressures of sharing images with real-life friends, as well as protecting them from the risk of exploitation.



USE PLATFORM SAFETY FEATURES

Make sure children are aware of how to report and block any inappropriate content they may receive. Review the various privacy settings available on the apps they use.

IMAGE SHARING: KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR PARENTS

OPEN CONVERSATIONS

Educate children on personal boundaries by letting them know they are never obligated to share images of themselves. Also, remind them not to request images from others.



ONLINE PREDATORS

It's important to have conversations with children about the distinction between online friends and genuine, real-life friendships.

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Understanding consent

Consent is the explicit, informed and voluntary agreement to engage in a particular activity, often referring to sexual interactions, but it also applies to other areas such as relationships, sharing personal boundaries and decision making. For children, this means ensuring that they have the capacity to give consent without feeling pressured, coerced or manipulated.

Why is it important for young people to understand consent?

- Teaching consent encourages children to respect their own and others' physical and emotional boundaries.
- Consent fosters open communication, mutual respect and equality in relationships.
- Educating teenagers about consent helps prevent situations of sexual assault, harassment and coercion.
- Understanding consent gives teenagers the tools to make informed choices about their body and relationships.
- Consent creates a culture of respect which helps to reduce harmful behaviours like victim-blaming.

The Four Cs of consent help children to know if consent has been or is still being given:

- **Clear:** Yes means yes. If it isn't a yes, it's a no.
- **Continuous:** Keeping check that it is still a yes; yes now doesn't mean yes later.
- **Coercion-free:** It isn't yes if pressure has been put on someone to do something.
- **Conscious:** The person giving consent must be fully capable of giving consent.

What parents and carers should know about Telegram

This summer, Telegram made the headlines when its owner was arrested.

Although it may not be the most popular messaging app among young people, it is considered one of the fastest-growing platforms.

While there are many discussions surrounding the risks associated with using Telegram, here are some key points to keep in mind:

4 WAYS TO TEACH CONSENT TO TEENAGERS

Teaching children about consent is vital for fostering respect and responsibility. Here are some effective strategies.



MODEL

Model consent in everyday situations. An example of this might be to ask for a hug.



TALK

Talk about what consent looks like in relationships. Use TV shows or news articles as conversation starters.



RESPECT

Emphasise mutual respect, taking into consideration seeking and giving consent.



DISCUSS

Discuss the legal aspect of consent, as well as the emotional impact of not gaining consent.

RISKS TO CONSIDER

IF YOUR CHILD USES TELEGRAM

 END-TO-END ENCRYPTION Private conversations known as 'Secret Chats' can only be accessed by the participants. This puts children at risk.	 SELF-DESTRUCTING MESSAGES A timer can be set when sending a message in a Secret Chat which will then self-destruct/disappear.	 LARGE GROUP CHATS Group chats known as Channels can include up to 200,000 participants. This allows for unregulated conversations.	 LOCAL CONNECTIONS 'People Nearby' connects users locally, but may expose children to grooming and exploitation risks.
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